In the Claims:

The claim numbering of original claims 13-16 has been amended to correct the duplicate use of claim number 13. Thus, original claims 13-16 correspond to claims 13-17 presented below.

Please amend the claims as indicated below. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions.

1. (currently amended) A broadband telephony system, comprising:

a plurality of remote endpoint devices coupled to a broadband data network;

a plurality of remote PSTNs coupled between the plurality of remote endpoint devices and a plurality of remote audio interfaces, each remote endpoint device being coupled to one remote PSTN, each remote PSTN being coupled to more than one remote endpoint device, each remote PSTN being coupled to at least one remote audio interface, and each remote audio interface being coupled to one remote PSTN;

an originating endpoint device coupled between the broadband data network and a local audio interface adapted to communicate an audio signal, the originating endpoint device adapted to select a destination audio interface for delivery of the audio signal, the destination audio interface being one of the plurality of remote audio interfaces; and

a database arrangement~~coupled to the broadband data network and~~ adapted <u>to</u> determine ~~an optimized~~<u>a preferred</u> path for the audio signal from the originating endpoint device to the destination audio interface by correlating each remote audio interface with one of the plurality of remote PSTNs, and correlating each of the plurality of remote endpoint devices with one of the plurality of remote PSTNs,<u> the database arrangement being separately situated from the originating endpoint device</u>.

2. (currently amended) The broadband telephony system of claim 1, wherein the ~~optimized~~ <u>preferred</u> path includes a destination endpoint device wherein the destination endpoint device is one of the plurality of remote endpoint devices being correlated to a destination PSTN, the destination PSTN being one of the plurality of remote PSTNs being uniquely

correlated to the destination audio interface, each of the audio interfaces communicating uncoded analog signals directly with a user, and the originating endpoint device including an audio processing circuit adapted to receive the uncoded analog signals and communicate with the broadband data network independent of any of the PSTNs.

3. (currently amended) The broadband telephony system of claim 2, wherein the optimized path is a cost- preferredoptimized path.

4. (currently amended) The broadband telephony system of claim 2, wherein the optimized path includes a pre-defined path portion.

5. (original) The broadband telephony system of claim 2, further comprising a local PSTN coupled between the originating endpoint device and the local audio interface, wherein the local audio interface is adapted to designate an identifier associated with a destination audio interface and communicate the identifier to the originating endpoint device through the local PSTN, and the originating endpoint device is adapted to select the destination audio interface responsive to the identifier designated by the local audio interface.

6. (original) The broadband telephony system of claim 2, wherein the destination audio interface is coupled to the destination endpoint device.

7. (currently amended) A broadband telephony system, comprising:

a plurality of remote endpoint devices coupled to a broadband data network;

a plurality of remote PSTNs coupled to the plurality of remote endpoint devices, each remote endpoint device being coupled to one remote PSTN, each PSTN being coupled to more than one remote endpoint device, each remote endpoint device being coupled to one of a plurality of remote audio interfaces;

an originating endpoint device coupled between the broadband data network and a local audio interface adapted to communicate an audio signal, the originating endpoint

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device adapted to select a destination audio interface for delivery of the audio signal, the destination audio interface being one of the plurality of remote audio interfaces; and

a database arrangement ~~coupled to the broadband data network and~~ adapted to determine ~~an optimized~~a preferred path for the audio signal from the originating endpoint device to the destination audio interface, the database arrangement being separately situated from the originating endpoint device.

8. (currently amended) The broadband telephony system of claim 7, wherein the database is adapted to uniquely ~~correlating~~correlate each remote audio interface with one of the plurality of remote endpoint devices, and the ~~optimized~~preferred path includes a destination endpoint device wherein the destination endpoint device is one of the plurality of remote endpoint devices being correlated to the destination audio interface, each of the audio interfaces communicating uncoded analog signals directly with a user, and the originating endpoint device including an audio processing circuit adapted to receive the uncoded analog signals and communicate with the broadband data network independent of any of the PSTNs.

9. (currently amended) The broadband telephony system of claim [[8]]7, wherein the optimized path is a cost-preferred ~~optimized~~ path, each of the audio interfaces communicating uncoded analog signals directly with a user, and the originating endpoint device including an audio processing circuit adapted to receive the uncoded analog signals and communicate with the broadband data network independent of any of the PSTNs.

10. (currently amended) The broadband telephony system of claim [[8]]7, wherein the optimized path includes a pre-defined path portion, each of the audio interfaces communicating uncoded analog signals directly with a user, and the originating endpoint device including an audio processing circuit adapted to receive the uncoded analog signals and communicate with the broadband data network independent of any of the PSTNs.

11. (original) The broadband telephony system of claim 8, further comprising a local PSTN coupled between the originating endpoint device and the local audio interface, wherein the local audio interface is adapted to designate an identifier associated with a destination audio interface and communicate the identifier to the originating endpoint device through the local PSTN, and the originating endpoint device is adapted to select the destination audio interface responsive to the identifier designated by the local audio interface.

12. (currently amended) A method of sharing resources of a broadband telephony system using an originating endpoint device coupled between a broadband data network and a local audio interface adapted to communicate an audio signal, the originating endpoint device adapted to select a destination audio interface for delivery of the audio signal, the destination audio interface being one of a plurality of remote audio interfaces, the method comprising:

registering with a registrar database arrangement information from a plurality of user-provided gateways, each gateway coupled to [[a]]the broadband data network and one of a plurality of regional telephone networks, and each of the plurality of regional telephone networks coupled to more than one gateway;

storing in the registrar database arrangement correlation information associating each of a plurality of audio interfaces and each gateway with one of the plurality of regional telephone networks;

exchanging with a plurality of other users, use of one user-provided gateway as a remote network-terminating gateway for access to the registrar database arrangement and use of other user-provided gateways as remote terminating gateways; and

at the originating endpoint device, processing uncoded analog signals and communicating representative audio signals with the broadband data network independent of any of the regional telephone networks.

13. (currently amended) The method of claim 12, further comprising:

selecting a destination audio interface;

routing a request from an originating gateway to the registrar database for access to the destination audio interface; and

determining ~~an optimized~~a preferred network path from the originating gateway to the destination audio interface, the ~~optimized~~preferred network path including a destination gateway, the destination gateway being one of the plurality of user-provided gateways associated with the regional telephone network associated with the destination audio interface.

14[[3]]. (currently amended) The method of claim 12, further comprising:

restricting use to the plurality of other users, of a user's gateway as a remote network-terminating gateway to a pre-determined maximum elapsed time within a periodic interval.

15[[4]]. (currently amended) The method of claim 12, further comprising:

restricting use to the plurality of other users, of a user's gateway as a remote network-terminating gateway to a pre-determined maximum number of calls.

16[[5]]. (currently amended) [[The]] A method of ~~claim 12, further~~ sharing resources of a broadband telephony system, the method comprising:

registering with a registrar database information from a plurality of user-provided gateways, each gateway coupled to a broadband data network and one of a plurality of regional telephone networks, and each of the plurality of regional telephone networks coupled to more than one gateway;

storing in the registrar database correlation information associating each of a plurality of audio interfaces and each gateway with one of the plurality of regional telephone networks;

exchanging with a plurality of other users, use of one user-provided gateway as a remote network-terminating gateway for access to the registrar database and use of other user-provided gateways as remote terminating gateways; and

restricting use to the plurality of other users, of a user's gateway as a remote network-terminating gateway to a pre-determined maximum elapsed time differential between a duration of calls originated by the user's gateway and a duration of calls terminated by the user's gateway.

17[[6]]. (currently amended) [[The]] A method of claim 12, further sharing resources of a broadband telephony system, the method comprising:

registering with a registrar database information from a plurality of user-provided gateways, each gateway coupled to a broadband data network and one of a plurality of regional telephone networks, and each of the plurality of regional telephone networks coupled to more than one gateway;

storing in the registrar database correlation information associating each of a plurality of audio interfaces and each gateway with one of the plurality of regional telephone networks;

exchanging with a plurality of other users, use of one user-provided gateway as a remote network-terminating gateway for access to the registrar database and use of other user-provided gateways as remote terminating gateways; and

restricting use of a user's gateway as a call-originating gateway to a pre-determined maximum elapsed time differential between a duration of calls originated by the user's gateway and a duration of calls terminated by the user's gateway.